The History of Navy Uniformed Audiologists - (Chapter One)

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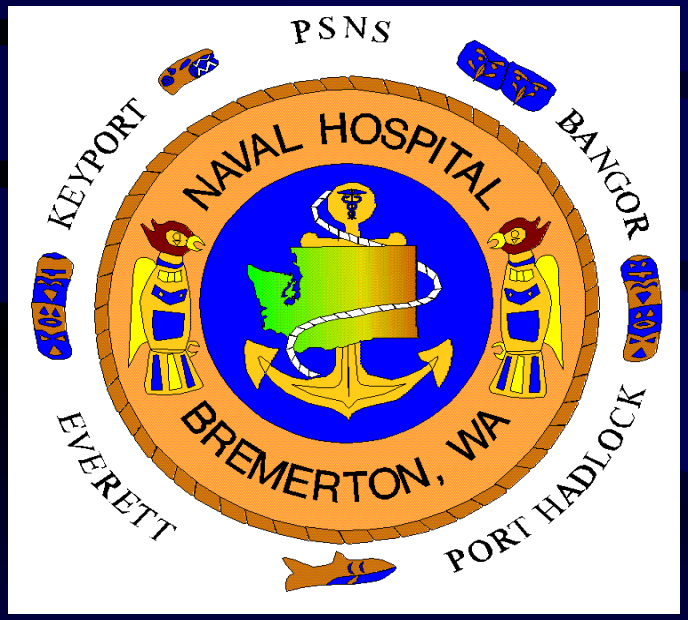

NEHC Workshop
22 March 2006

Operational Audiology Officer (OAO)

DESIG: 2305/00 NOBC:

Highlights of our history:

- LT Herm Kidder comes on active duty 1978, Ed Cahill 1979, 8 more (“First 10”) in summer 1980, typically assigned to ENT, all borrowed billets.

- LCDR Dave Macys, IH SL, double-hats as our SL.

- December 1980, BUMED Policy Council decides uniformed audiology not needed in ENT Clinics. We’d heard rumors, then…

- Spring 1981, Herm applies for extension of 3-yr tour, gets letter back denying extension and citing the “recent Navy policy decision

Summer 1981, SG tours Yokosuka, tells Jim Wax he is <u>delighted</u> with work uniformed audiologists are doing.

When audiology is tanked, Jim writes him ..

"What gives? You said....."

SG directs his think tank to think aga

Nov 1981, NEHC CO, CAPT Dick Nelson (future SG) petitions BUMED:

- NEHC will sponsor program
- Make billets permanent, requirement is 20
- **Describes OAO with NOBC 0871**
- Suggests peacetime duties:
  - 60% time in Occ Hlth (move billets to OH/PMD from ENT! Yeah!!)
  - 30% ENT support
  -10% general Naval Officer

- Identifies contingency role:
  - Support Fleet Hospital or MMART (Mobile Medical Augmentation Readiness Team) treat acoustic trauma cases in field.

Supporting ltr CDR Ted Fetter, Chief, O&HNS, Portsmouth:

"The BUMED decision to terminate the MSC audiology program is, in my opinion, tantamount to a decision to severely impair or possibly terminate the Navy's HCP."

(before uniformed audiologist took on the mission of overseeing testing and referrals), "the audiometric testing error rate for those personnel referred from regional audiometric testing units…consistently exceeded 60%"

"..the single most important factor in the further development of this region's HCP was the availability of MSC audiologists. They have enabled a quantum leap forward."

- May 1982, Policy Council reports back to SG, notes
  the lack of contingency role that previously sank the
  program resolved. Concluded “military audiologists
  should be specifically linked with the HCP.”

Combat Audiology is born!!!

- SG approves max. (total 20)

(And Herm comes back!!)

Additional milestones:

- Late 1980's DoDDS MRS support (PL 94-142, results in additional MRS (later EIDS) support billets OCONUS (Okinawa, Yokosuka & Iwakuni, later Sigonella), yielding total 9 OCONUS billets of 22 on board.
- Multiple "right sizing" evolutions later, we are hanging in there due to difficulty of staffing OCONUS billets with civilians.
- To date, no OAO has ever deployed with Fleet Hospital or otherwise.
- **Motto: If you don't want to serve overseas, look for another job.**

Other notables:

Early 80's, all 2215/16 forms had to be reviewed by another tech or OAO - even those done by OAO!

- Follow-up #1 was +15 hrs after exposure (90% rested)
- Follow-up #2 after 40 hrs noise-free (98% rested)
- "5-day audiogram" to be done after confirming STS on the 40-hr (pull them out of noise for 5 days! NOT!!)
- Detailed Surveillance Program (test every 60 days until audiologist available)

Our instruments evolved..

- Self-recording audiometers mechanically fragile
- Beltone 10D, GS-1707, MA-40 manuals preferred
- First MCA (about 1982) Tracor RA410N, later RA-400 stand-alones, data strip transcribed to DD Forms
- Clinical audiometers Grason Stadler 1701, MA-24, Tracoustics Program III (ugh!), GSI-16 a solid favorite
- RA-600 first group MCA (1985?), save to disk, HEARS system goal was 4 people in 15 minutes, printed with impact printer (a

- Work on what we now know as DOEHRS about 1993 at HCWG level. Developed standardized biz practices tri-service, obtained Health Affairs funding for the project.

- EARS, EARS-3A, DOHRS, and finally DOEHRS, forced to field early in 1999 (Y2K), no time to field test, no training $, nobody talking “seamless integration” on our side of the fence.

- The product you enjoy today is result of LOTS of hard work, hundreds of SCRs from the field, have to mention Navy

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Our Shipmates who Stood the Watch.....

1978: LCDR Herman Kidder, PhD (San Diego), 1st OAO S.L., ret

1979: Ed Cahill (NNMC Bethesda), Med School?

1980: Balance of "The First 10" come on board via OIS, Newport

- LCDR Al Sanders (Norfolk), retired

- LT Walt Otto (Charleston), forced out, age

- LCDR Allan Gross (Jacksonville), retired

- LT Vic Berrett (Norfolk), forced out, age

- LCDR Jim Wax (Yokosuka), became S.L., retired

- LT Chuck Jackson (Bremerton), RAD for NMCSD position

- LT John Schlieffer (Oakland), transferred USAF

Other former OAOs: (w/apologies….)

Retired:

CAPT Kathy Hartmann

CDR Keith Wolgemuth

CDR Bob Rogers

LCDR Jon Saul

RAD:

LT Anne Shields

LT Sheila Robinson

LT Jeff Young

LT Kathy Kopay

LT Terry Moore

LT Teddi Bronken

Others:

CDR Joyce Seidman (xfer HCA)

LT Mari Schulz

LT Ken Curtis

LT Karen Strickland Fernandez

LT Michelle Mignor Grimes

LT Gail Neuhan

LT Gina Cavalli

LT Jim Davis

Your Questions/Comments, Please